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California GARDEN



Miss Sessions Breaks Ground for Horticultural
Building at San Francisco Exposition Site

(Story on Page 3)

JANUARY - 1939 - FEBRUARY



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*Mr. McLean is Vice President of
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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

The San Diego Floral Association

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
P. O. Box 323, San Diego, Cal.

Thos. F. McMullen, Editor
John D. Wimmer, Assoc. Editor

Jan.-Feb, 1939

Vol. 30

No. 7

Entered as second-class matter December 8, 1910, at the Post Office at Point Loma, California, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

California Garden is on the list of publications authorized by the San Diego Retail Merchants Association.

Rates on Request

Advertising Copy should be in by the 25th of preceding month.

Subscription to Magazine, \$1.00 per year; Membership \$1.50 per year; Magazine and Membership combined, \$2.00 per year.

Meeting held third Tuesday of each month at Floral Bldg., Balboa Park, 7:30 P. M.
Toft Printing Co., 1129 2nd St., San Diego

Valentine Flowers

By FLORENCE A. PIERCE

Plants and flowers are welcome gifts at any time, but certain plants seem especially well adapted for certain occasions. The poinsettia we associate with Christmas, the lily with Easter and chrysanthemum with the Thanksgiving season. And so for St. Valentine, the old-fashioned Bleeding Heart is particularly suitable. *Dicentra Spectabilis* was a favorite in gardens of long ago, and was seen in many an old New England door yard. But after all, it is not so old, in our country, as we may have supposed. It was introduced to the gardens of English speaking folk in 1846, when the London Horticultural Society received a single plant from the north of China. It quickly became popular.

The fern-like foliage and graceful, arching stems of rosy heart-shaped pendant flowers are greatly admired. Unfortunately it does not seem happy in southern California gardens, but many of the florists have beautiful specimens as potted plants. *Dicentra formosa*, or Western Dutchmans Breeches seems to feel more at home and does well in a cool lath house, growing and blooming from year to year. The foliage is dainty and the flowers are a paler pink than *Dicentra spectabilis*. It is very lovely, and well worth trying.

Another plant most suitable for the Valentine season is the small, single-flowered geranium known as

Sweetheart. The blossom is white, with a bright red blotch, almost heart-shaped, in the center.

For Washington's birthday, the comparatively new *Petunia*, Martha Washington, is very pleasing. The plant is compact, and is covered with frilly blossoms of pale pink with a wine-red center. As a pot plant it is very attractive.

It is a pretty custom to observe the different holidays of the year with appropriate flowers and plants, and there are many from which to choose.

The poet Longfellow, in his "Language of Flowers" pays tribute in these words:

"In all places, then, and in all seasons,

Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,

Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,

How akin they are to human beings."

Florence A. Pierce.

There is a new *Hollyhock*—Indian Spring—which blooms the first year, usually 5 months from seed. Double and semi-double fringed pink flower. Secondary shoots with flowers appear the same year.

COVER CUT COURTESY
GOLDEN GATE
EXPOSITION

January Meeting

The regular meeting of the Floral Society was held on January 17th in the Floral Building.

Mr. Frank S. Gander took us for a walk-talk around San Diego County in a most ingenious way. Showing beautiful colored slides and describing the native plants of each region, he led us from Point Loma along the southern side of the county to the mountains, then north through semi-arid valleys, then east, and down the coast.

He brought out in a most interesting way the analogy between the small canyon assigned to native plants in Balboa Park, and the whole county, and showed how spots could be selected in the canyon where native plants from different parts of the county could grow.

He pointed out how a natural seedling must concentrate on root growth in its first years, whereas a pot-grown and nurtured seed will develop much more plant and less root. Hence, when such a plant is set out in the open, it must be watered for a year or two until it adjusts itself.

Mr. Gander presented to the Society twelve pots of native plants from different parts of the county, to be set out in the canyon. This will make a splendid addition to the development that we have started.

Miss Sessions closed the meeting with another of her interesting talks bringing us up to date in garden affairs.

Mineral Plant Food

By FREDERICK G. JACKSON

Nature has a complicated way of providing and maintaining the fertility of the earth.

Even a brief review must go back to the formation of the original rocks, as they gradually crystallized from a molten mass. It is estimated that about a half of the entire mass of the world is silicon, therefore most of the crystals formed were silicates of various sorts. The chemistry of silicates is very complicated and is far from completely comprehended as yet, so we will dip but a little way into it here. But it is recognized that when all the factors of a compound that is insoluble under the existing conditions are present, that compound will continue to form and crystallize out until it has exhausted the supply of one of its factors. Thus a molten mass containing a good many different elements and gradually cooling, may easily form several successive crystalline structures within itself. If you will look at a piece of granite, for instance, you will easily distinguish a variety of crystals, different even to the naked eye.

When a solid mountain of granite is thrust above the earth's surface, Nature begins to work on it with her tools, heat and cold, rain and wind. Expansion and contraction with changing temperature will open cracks which rain penetrates. Freezing of the rainwater expands them. Nothing is completely insoluble in water, but the solubilities of different compounds vary very greatly and bear no relation to their freezing points. So one sort of crystals will dissolve out first and weaken the surface structure. There may be chemical changes also in connection with this "weathering." The result is that fragments of all sizes will break off of the mountain side and fall and slip to more level places. Weathering is thus a process of weathering down and leveling off. These fragments, or rocks, are carried on by brooks and streams to continually lower levels, and are continually being reduced

in size by weathering. The size of rock that can be rolled by a stream depends on the rate of flow of the stream. Streams also carry minerals in suspension (mud) and in solution. Naturally they do most of their moving during floods.

The principal elements forming the crystalline rocks may be divided into three classes:-

Alkalies: Potassium, Sodium and Lithium.

Alkaline Earths: Calcium, Magnesium, iron and Aluminum.

Bases: Silicon, Phosphorus and Boron.

The crystalline minerals are generally double compounds, like potassium calcium phosphate, or sodium aluminum silicate. Under the action of carbon dioxide dissolved in rainwater, such compounds gradually break up into simpler and often more soluble compounds such as potassium or sodium carbonate, which are freely soluble, and simpler phosphates or aluminum silicate (clay) and silica (sand). Thus the mountain rock reaches the plains country as 1, still undecomposed stones; 2, grains of sand; 3, clay; 4, finely divided phosphates; 5, soluble potash salts. These are the makings of a fertile soil.

As natural vegetation feeds on such a soil, its roots draw out from the damp ground solutions of the salts that it needs for its growth. In the cycle of Nature it dies down and contributes to the soil the humus and combined nitrogen that were lacking. The salts that are removed by a growing plant are mostly restored to the soil by its decay. The fertilizing elements of the soil are slowly replenished against accidental loss by the continued breakdown of complex silicates and phosphates, still present in rocks, stones, and even flakes, into simpler and more soluble salts. Thus a fertile soil tends to become deeper and be able to support increasingly heavy vegetable growth.

In studying the rings in a cross-section of a tree trunk, it is readily

seen that they are not uniform in thickness. One or more broad rings, formed by seasons of strong growth, are followed by narrower rings, showing seasons of restricted growth. The strong growth is doubtless due to favorable weather conditions, but the subsequent restricted growth may be due not solely to unfavorable weather. The previous strong growth would have temporarily depleted the store of mineral food in the soil. This would restrict the possible amount of growth under otherwise most favorable conditions.

When man controls the growth of plants, he wants bigger results. He stirs up the top soil with a plow to let the roots penetrate more deeply. He develops and selects plants that will make heavy growth, so that they draw heavily on the soil. Then he carries away from his acres at least a part of the growth, and repeats the process. A virgin soil will yield wonderful crops for a few years. Then the yield will diminish. The soil cannot stand the pace that man the farmer sets.

For maximum crops the farmer may choose any of several courses. He may work his soil out till it doesn't pay any more, then move on. He may rest it a year every few years and allow Nature to replenish the supply of mineral foods by decomposition of minerals. He may rotate his crops, growing each year a plant that specializes on a different mineral food. He may increase the mineral food content of his soil by adding fertilizer. He may combine any two or all of the last three methods.

Recently much attention has been given to a new system of soil-less agriculture. Garden crops are grown by this method with their roots in tanks containing solutions of the proper mineral foods in the proper concentrations. The bodies of the plants are held up by a non-fertile support. Enormous yields per acre are attained by thus confining the foods to the immediate reach of the plant roots. Also a high efficiency for the fertilizer is attained.

Gardening in San Diego is much like gardening in tanks. Our top
(Continued on Page 5)

The Exposition's 40 Week Flower Show

By NORVELL GILLESPIE Horticultural Councillor—S. F. Exposition

San Diego can well be proud of the fact that its foremost horticulturist—Miss Kate Sessions—had a hand in the horticultural activities of the Golden Gate International Exposition, which opens this month in San Francisco. On November 26, Miss Sessions participated in the ground breaking ceremonies of the California Commission's Floricultural Hall on Treasure Island. She and Miss Alice Eastwood, world famous botanist from the California Academy of Sciences, were accorded the honor of turning over the first soil. (N. B. Miss Sessions brought along her own shovel—she was making certain she would have a nice big husky one!)

Other people having a hand in the ground breaking exercises included Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne, Mrs. Luther Burbank, eight-year-old Juneva Lanser, youngest garden club member in the state, Mrs. M. L. Kelly, Miss Jean Boyd, Sydney B. Mitchell, John McLaren of Golden Gate Park, Dr. George H. Hecke, and J. B. Crombie.

Now the building is up—a beautiful cel-o-glass covered lath house, 19 feet long and 60 feet wide. Within its four walls, California horticulture should receive a new push. Virtually every important grower in the west will be represented. With all these fine new plants, gardening enthusiasm should hit a new high.

In addition to claiming fame as the world's longest flower show, this is the first time that finest plants of the Pacific Coast have ever been gathered under one roof. Everything from rare Seattle Alpine plants to San Diego poinsettias will be shown. As an added treat, the giant flying clipper ships will regularly bring in orchids and other native plants from the Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands and Australia. In some instances, rare Australian natives will be frozen in huge blocks of ice and rushed to the Fair by fast boats.

About six thousand square feet is devoted entirely to exhibit area. The designers have made certain that there is ample aisle space so that all exhibits can be enjoyed in comfort. The floor designs will be varied several times each month, according to the type of material being shown.

Though the bulk of the plant material will be cut flowers, there will be plenty of live specimens in pots, cans and tubs. Because of the great expense involved and amount of time required, there will be no attempt to do a garden show. Mrs. M. L. Kelly, one of the members of the executive committee, likes to term it a stylized bench show, a streamlined 1939 improvement over what they have been doing at the European flower shows for years and years. Practically everybody in the state with any flower show experience was consulted in an effort to get the best ideas. Lovell Swisher, manager of Pasadena's very successful fall flower show, had many good suggestions. William Stribling, manager of the Santa Barbara show, had some good ideas too.

The executive committee in charge of the program has scheduled thirty theme shows. They will stress the thirty prominent flowers of the west. For example, they will include such favorites as roses, gladiolus, delphiniums, lilies, geraniums, anemones and ranunculus, daffodils, tulips and others. Great quantities of them will be used in masses to throw the spotlight of public interest on them.

In mid-March, for instance, anemones and ranunculi will be jointly spotlighted. About one hundred thousand cut blooms will be sent up to San Francisco from the world famous anemone and ranunculus fields at Oceanside and Inglewood. Poinsettias will be spotlighted in late November when great quantities are sent from Encinitas.

Several thousand square feet of outdoor exhibits have been planned. Several thousand roses from Southern California, geraniums from Oceanside, succulents, giant sixty-four petaled nasturtiums, and recently created varieties of annuals will be shown. During the winter months, fifteen thousand Burpee's new Red and Gold hybrid marigolds were started at their Vista seed farm for the Exposition. Only the favored frost-free weather at Vista would permit a stunt like this.

Many plant societies have mapped out ambitious plans for participation. The American Begonia Society of Long Beach is putting in a big exhibit of plants in March that will be shown until December 2. The rapid-growing Southern California organization started work on its plans last October. The Ventura branch of the society is giving liberal support in the way of plants and time.

The Cactus and Succulent Society of Pasadena is gathering up the finest specimens for an outstanding display in mid-summer. The American Fuchsia Society started grooming plants in early spring in anticipation of a big show in latter August. The Santa Barbara Horticultural Society, composed mainly of estate gardeners, is sending up cut blooms, branches from outstanding shrubbery and trees, and tubbed specimens. W. M. James of the Dickinson estate is sending up several eight-foot branches from the famous South African silver tree. William Stribling of the Riven Rock estate is sending up several specimen chrysanthemums trained in chair shapes.

San Diego's famous Balboa Park is expected to send up regular shipments of blooming branches from unusual trees and shrubs.

From present indications, it appears that some kind of plant material from San Diego or its vicinity will be on display constantly during the forty weeks period. The California Commission bids you welcome to Floricultural Hall. It is located on California Avenue just across the street from the Pan-American hangar. We'll be glad to see you!

FAMOUS SAN DIEGAN ON EXTENSION STAFF

Most visitors to San Diego succumb to the charm of Miss Kate Sessions whether they actually meet that delightful and dynamic lady or not, for you can't walk through the city's downtown plaza and ignore the giant cocos plumosa palms she planted there with her own hands in 1897. Nor can you drive through the lovely rambling acreage of the city's Balboa Park without seeing on every side evidences of her thoughtful artistry.

Miss Sessions is a horticulturist with a national reputation in the profession which she chose more than a half century ago—in a day when women's professional activities extended to very few lines other than teaching. Indeed, Miss Sessions, who was born in San Francisco and graduated from the University of California in 1881, taught in Oakland schools a year or two and then came to San Diego to teach and become vice-principal of the high school. She might have gone on with that for the next half century if, for reason of health, she had not been forced to look about for an activity less confining.

Trees For A Lease

She chose the nursery business and brought to it a genuine love for all growing things and an almost unrivaled sense of artistic planting. In February of 1892 the San Diego City Council passed an ordinance granting her request to use and cultivate thirty acres in Balboa Park for a nursery. In return she was to plant yearly in the park one hundred trees which would become the permanent property of the city and, in addition, donate three hundred more annually for the city's use. So today her handiwork is everywhere—in the plaza, in Balboa Park, along Fifth street where her "rent" trees flourish and in all the old school grounds where trees planted according to her old agreement with the town are still flourishing.

In 1903, her own beautification of the Balboa Park district having caused a real estate boom which precluded her expanding nursery activities in that now well-settled location, Miss Sessions acquired a

large acreage for her nursery business at Mission Hills. Today, ignoring the fact that her 81 years might entitle her to a more restful existence, she vigorously carries on her professional activities at her Pacific Beach acres, whither she moved 24 years ago.

Charm and Vitality

That so very small a person as Miss Sessions should be the "mother" of a great, sprawling, beautiful, artistic offspring such as Balboa Park seems incredible until you meet her, and then your realize that this one-time "prettiest co-ed at Berkeley" has a charm and vitality of the sort that never wane. San Diego has heaped honors upon her and indeed, the entire state has recognized her activities on behalf of intelligent planting for California. Not long ago she was a complimented guest of honor when the new State Building for the 1940 Exposition in San Francisco was dedicated and she herself turned over the first spadeful of earth to mark the beginning of the building.

"San Diego is completely different from the rest of the United States horticulturally," says Miss Sessions, "so in the beginning I had to study what would flourish here and I found that this part of the state could easily become a horticultural emporium. I have specialized in bringing to San Diego plants which flourish only in conservatories in other parts of the state and planting them here to find that they grow successfully and even lavishly out of doors. Of course," she adds sententiously, "I knew better than to try orchids!"

Plant Thermometers

"Plant life here is a self registering thermometer of the climate. Next to the wonderful climatic condition itself, plant life is the most attractive thing about San Diego, but plant culture is in its infancy. There are thousands of things yet to try out."

And seemingly a full time nursery business, national correspondence in her field, continual experimental and research work, plus a jaunt or two about the state to be honored here and there is not enough to keep Miss Sessions busy.

She is the newest member of the University of California Extension Division's teaching staff in San Diego and her class is the second largest in the University's current schedule.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Extension Division
409 Scripps Building
San Diego

January 16, 1939

Mr. Tom McMullen
Editor California Garden
San Diego, Calif.

Dear Sir:

Here is the data on Miss Sessions' new classes.

First, let me explain how the course is arranged. The class "805A B-C-D. Gardening Practice and Landscape Design," has the following outline:

For the average home owner. Improvement of soil condition. When to sow for bloom at specified time. Planning the flower garden as to color and continuous bloom. Perennial gardens, and plant identification, as well as shrubs and trees. Material best suited to various types of architecture.

The lettering A-B-C-D. means the class is jointed, like a rattlesnake's rattle. There are fifteen hours in each section (ten ½-hour meetings) and each section is open to new students.

This spring Miss Sessions offers the two courses:

805B. Gardening and Landscape Design.

Wednesday, beginning February 8, 10-11:30 a.m., room 18 Florence School (at First and University), 10 meetings, \$6. This is a continuation of her present course, with emphasis on gardening conditions.

805A. Gardening Practice and Landscape Design.

Friday, beginning February 10, 4:5:30 p.m., room 18 Florence School, 10 meetings, \$6.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Culbertson,
Information Clerk

ORNAMENTAL PLANTS
—for—
SUBTROPICAL REGIONS

Roland S. Hoyt, landscape architect who has appeared before our group as lecturer, has just completed a book with above title which is a handbook for ready reference regarding any planting problem. The book is an outgrowth of a previous work on planting lists and should prove even more popular than the first one.

In his preface Mr. Hoyt says: "There seem to be few available books on ornamental plants where any appreciable attempt has been made to limit the scope geographically. . . . This work limits itself to what may be termed Sub-Tropical Regions . . . While being descriptive in a degree, it is essentially an attempt to organize and estimate the value of the different plants and place them within the reach and understanding of the average gardener."

I was interested in what Mr. Hoyt had to say about palms inasmuch as the palm planting Mr. Hoyt made at the Civic Center has come under much discussion lately. Quoting the book again, it says: "PALMS—symbolize grandeur and nobility in nature. They are the aristocrats and carry the impression of tropical magnificence to its further extreme." Surely we should plant palms wherever possible, especially around our public buildings, for what better advertisement could we have of our mild climate?

The rating lists include: structural form, cultural aspects, purpose adaptation, ornamental characters, distinctive qualities and other helpful hints for selecting the right plant for the right location.

In Garden Miscellanea are included the wild flower garden, old fashioned gardens, rock gardens, water gardens and a number of other specialized gardens. This is a book to which you will refer often. LIVINGSTON PRESS, LOS ANGELES, \$3.50.

A new Petunia — Lady Bird. Dwarf, compact variety. Flowers a deep topaz-rose with darker throat. Ideal for bedding. Prolific blooms all season.

THE GARDENER'S TRAVEL
BOOK

By Edward I. Farrington

Here for the first time is a quite complete volume which tells garden-minded travellers where to find the most interesting points of horticultural interest in every state of the Union and in Canada. The guide book tells of private gardens, parks, wild flower displays, fruit blossom festivals, exhibitions, arboretums and many other gatherings of plants.

The book was edited for the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and their stamp of approval is enough to recommend the book without going into the make-up and comment on the number of fine illustrations, the brief but adequate descriptions of nearly every fine garden, other valuable information such as the botanical and historical aspects of certain outstanding trees, where experiment stations are located, the conveniences available for travelers and where to apply for show dates and information of a changing nature.

Miss Sessions is mentioned, of course, and our own Balboa and Presidio Parks and the Geo. W. Marston garden. One can't help feeling it was too bad to miss Mr. Robinson's Rosecroft Begonia gardens on Pt. Loma in their listing.

You will like this book and when you go traveling next summer the Gardener's Travel Book should travel with you.

Hale, Cushman & Flint. Boston, Mass., \$2.50.

December 15, 1938

Thos. F. McMullen
Editor "California Garden"

Dear Sir:

Possibly some of the garden fans who read "California Garden" can match my petunia—a single magenta variety—which has attained the height of one hundred eight inches—but I have never seen one used as a climber before. I had a vacant trellis on my front porch—east exposure, and began tying up the branches or runners—have continued the tying from time to time as the wind breaks the stalks easily.

The plant was put in during the spring and has been constantly in

bloom. It is a thing of delicate beauty and could be used effectively in sheltered places.

Best wishes for the New Year!

Mrs. Dean Blake.

Mr. and Mrs. David Fairchild have a winter home at Coconut Grove, Florida and the Fairchild tropical garden contains many beautiful tropical plants. One section is called the Palmetum and during the past summer 225 species of palms were planted there. The summers are too wet for the eucalyptus to flourish.

Mr. Fairchild has recently published a new book entitled "The World Is My Garden." In his book "Exploring for Plants", published in 1930, the frontispiece is a photo of a tree which goats climb to nip only the tender new shoots—for the tree is savage with spines all over.

The tree, argania sideroxylon, furnishes a nut rich in oil used for cooking and exporting. The cattle, sheep and goats live upon the foliage. Some plants of this tree are bearing nuts at Pacific Beach although the shrub is less than eight feet high.

In its native home at Mogador a northwest section of Morocco, a veritable desert region, there are over a million acres and the trees are a few hundred years old—and look as though set out like an orchard rather than a native forest and many are symmetrical in shape.

—K. O. S.

Mineral Plant Food

(Continued from Page 2)

soil has been carried so far away by Nature that it has lost most of its mineral food reserve. It is nearly all clay and sand, a non-fertile support for the bodies of the plants. Below this is often hardpan, or at least a layer of heavy clay, which acts like the tank in restricting water. We must maintain the water content of the "tanks" that we call gardens by irrigation, but if we build up and maintain the proper amounts of mineral foods, by adding fertilizer at intervals, we also can have enormous yields at high fertilizer efficiency.

Problems of the Soil

By R. R. McLEAN, County Agricultural Commissioner

Question: A friend told me she was quite sure she knew of people who had been made sick by eating frozen oranges and grapefruit. Now I have always understood that frozen citrus fruits were harmless. Will you kindly tell me the right of it?

Answer: Reply to a similar question, in which it was denied that frozen citrus was harmful to anyone, was made in these columns recently, but apparently the statement will bear repeating if there are still those who believe as your friend does. Although frozen oranges and grapefruit cannot legally be sold, there is always the possibility of finding such fruit on one's own trees or having it given one. There is absolutely no evidence that frozen citrus fruit is harmful when eaten. On the contrary all authorities consulted by the writer state the exact opposite.

Some years after the disastrous freeze of 1913, a much more serious freeze than that of January, 1937, Dr. H. J. Webber of the Citrus the foremost citrus authority in to it as follows: "Oranges that were frozen sometimes develop a bitter taste after the freeze. This, however, was by no means universal and later this bitterness disappeared. Even when no bitterness was produced the flavor was affected, becoming gradually less rich. No harmful ingredients developed, however, and the oranges were very generally eaten so long as they remained juicy and palatable. So much was said immediately after the freeze regarding the possible injury to health that might result from eating of frozen fruit that this point should be strongly emphasized Florida and indeed in practically every orange country, frozen fruits have from time to time been used in large quantities without injury. The evidence on this matter is so extensive that we may conclude, without fear of contradiction, that under all ordinary conditions frozen fruit may be eaten with

the same impunity as normal, unfrozen oranges remain juicy and palatable, they may be considered as a wholesome article of food." This also applies, naturally, to lemons and grapefruit as well as oranges.

* * *

Question: I had planned to set out a dozen or more citrus trees this spring but I rather hesitate to go ahead with my plan. What kind of trees are the most hardy? How often do freezes come?

Question first, a freeze as serious as the one experienced in 1937 could be expected not more than four or five times in a hundred years. Although we had a minor freeze in San Diego county 12 or 15 years ago, no serious one has occurred since 1913, just 26 years ago. Do not hesitate to plant as you had planned. It may be 15 or 20 years before we have another set-back of this character and even if there should be cold weather from time to time, you can always protect your trees at small cost by the use of orchard heaters. Even this will probably not be necessary unless your planting is in an exposed and cold location.

As to the relative hardiness of trees, Tangerines and Satsuma oranges are said to be the most hardy, followed by navel and Valencia oranges, grapefruit, lemons and limes in the order named. Valencia and navel oranges are about equal in hardiness, but there is some difference between lemons, Lisbon and Villa Francas being slightly more hardy than Eureka's. The relative hardiness of trees, as above indicated, does not necessarily extend to the fruit. For instance, pomelos or grapefruit are less easily injured by cold than many of the other fruits named. Washington navel oranges are commonly more hardy than Valencia oranges. Tangarine fruits are more easily frozen than either Valencia or navel oranges even though the trees are considerably more resistant to cold.

Stretching Happy Hours Spent Among Your Flowers

. . . is SIMPLE for the office worker who enjoys healthful relaxation in his garden. Though he may come home long after sundown, he is never too late with GARDEN LIGHTING to help him prolong his garden hours.

. . . is UNIQUE for the host or hostess looking for a novel setting for that next meeting of the bridge club, barbecue, after-dinner coffee, after theatre party, or even a wedding, for GARDEN LIGHTING adds a new beauty to your home that will live long in the memory of your guests.

. . . is EFFECTIVE because flowers, trees, bushes, and ponds have a new combination of color and hue in your garden that you never knew existed before. Your garden has a personality . . . let us help you develop it with GARDEN LIGHTING. A company representative will gladly call at your convenience to help make suggestions. Phone or write.

* * *

SAN DIEGO CONSOLIDATED GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY

867 SIXTH AVENUE
SAN DIEGO, CALIF.

Phone: Franklin 4121

Question: My asparagus seems to have dead or nearly dead tops. Is it too early to take them off or should they be left until spring? What treatment should be given the bed as to fertilizers and when? Shall I use salt?—B.H.

Answer: When the tops die they are of no further value and can be removed. There is no conclusive evidence to prove that salt is of any value in fertilizing asparagus although this has been the custom in some asparagus-growing sections of the east. Asparagus will withstand more salt in the soil than any other vegetable, with the possible of exception of certain beets, but it apparently does well in spite of the salt, not because of it, although this point is disputed by some authorities. If no fertilizer has already been given you can apply quantities of barnyard manure at this time, or that from chicken runs, although it would have been better to have applied it earlier. In the spring, say in February, March and April, use a quick-acting nitrogenous fertilizer, as sulphate of ammonia, nitrate of lime or nitrate of soda, scattering over the bed and irrigating in. Organic fertilizers, as strawy manures, applied in the summer and early fall are important at that time inasmuch as they aid in the development of tops and roots upon which development depends next seasons cut. Some growers believe in applying fertilizers just as soon as cutting stops. This is undoubtedly good practice and one could not go wrong in following it. There is much difference of opinion and practice concerning the fertilizing of asparagus, but the point to bear in mind is that good strong shoots depend upon a strong root system and any method of fertilization that will properly develop the root system should bring results.

Now is the time to be thinking of the flowers you are going to exhibit in our Spring Show. Our next issue will carry details of the big event but preparation is of paramount importance at this time if you are going to carry away prizes.

AMERICAN FUCHSIA SOCIETY NOTES

The year of 1938 was one of great activity and some success, and for 1939 we are facing an opportunity hardly ever to be repeated. Of the millions we expect to visit our "Fair City" there will be thousands interested in our "Fuchsia Show." An effective invitation to gain new members will have to be extended by each one of us. The larger our membership the more the individual member will gain—by greater activity, by a better bulletin, by a larger circle of friends and opportunities.

There is in preparation a Special Exposition Bulletin for the members and also to be sold to the visitors to our show at the fair. We shall make it as good as finances and ability permit. It is to include a membership roster and we wish to include all the new members we expect to gain for 1939. To make this possible with a reasonably good showings, dues for 1939 should be paid without delay.

As an extraordinary offer to new members who pay their dues before or at least at the general meeting, we shall send a set of bulletins of 1938 as long as supply permits.

Question: Is there any treatment I should give gladiolus and narcissus bulbs before planting? I suppose I should have planted before this but I though perhaps the bulbs should be treated first.—Mrs. G.B.

Answer: If the narcissus bulbs are clean, no treatment is necessary or advisable. It is always advisable to treat gladiolus bulbs after they are lifted and during storage for the possible presence of gladiolus thrips since that insect is now quite generally distributed through our plantings. One of the simplest control measures is to place the bulbs and corms in tight paper bags, and then scatter naphthalene flakes over them, using about an ounce to each 100 medium-sized corms and bulbs. The tops of the bags should then be folded over to prevent the fumes from escaping. About three weeks' exposure at 60 degrees F. will kill all stages of the insects that may be present.

would correctly do with most other shrubs, there would be still sufficient wakefulness and joy in living and blooming left in your plants to force the few remaining buds into nice young tender shoots—so juicy and soft that the least little frost will kill them and—here is the point—you might not have any dormant buds left for new life in spring.

It is true that even if the whole top of your plant is killed by frost, you can still hope to get new growth from the roots. But if you have developed a nicely shaped plant, by judicious pruning throughout the summer, you wish to save it. If so, first give the plant a chance to rest, don't feed, don't water. You might remove dry old stubs or some out of place branches, but radical cutting back of the good branches to just a few dormant buds that will form new laterals in spring time should not be done till all danger of frost is past.

THIS IS WEEDING OUT TIME

Overcome sentiments for that dear old plant that really never was very much to be proud of, force yourself to throw it out and get something good instead. Some of our really good varieties have a rather short life time, at least, they flower less when their wood gets hard. Of these you may now root heel cuttings to make new plants to replace the old ones, about six inches long in the open ground three inches deep, close to your old plant, unless you mark them well.

DO NOT HESITATE TO TRANSPLANT NOW

If you have a plant in the wrong place—consider well its growth habit—some will do best against a wall, fence or lattice—some are strictly climbers and many may be trained to climb. Others make fine compact shrubs or even standards. Give each the proper space. Don't forget some basket varieties for pergola, porch or under trees; they are beautiful though the watering will keep you busy.

A BUSY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU

G. Niederholzer,
405 Collingwood St., S. F.

SCARLETT O'HARA—A CLIMBER

Coincident with the selection of the screen Scarlett O'Hara comes the announcement that the new Morning Glory of the same name is the only Gold Medal winner this year in the All-American annual selections.

The flower is actually a dark wine-red or "carnelian red" and is so unusual that it should cause as much comment in the garden world as the literary Scarlett did in her field. The blooms are medium size and stay open longer than the old fashioned Morning Glories. The first blossoms should appear 2 months after sowing seed.

THE HUNDRED YEAR OLD QUEEN OF BEGONIAS

It was in 1839 when the original white species of the begonia semperflorens was introduced into Europe from Brazil. In spite of all the progress made in cultivating new species there are as yet no perfect begonias. The breeder must therefore continue cultivating the species. Begonias are grown for their decorative effect in flower beds, in pots and for window and balcony-decoration as well as to supply the market with plants blooming in winter. The popularity of these plants is due to the fact that they are so easily propagated and grown. Breeders aim at obtaining plants that are sun-and-moisture-resisting, early and perennial, with flowers in beautiful shades of colors, showing off well but not too strongly from leaves. At the XII International Horticultural Congress R. Chaubert—France expressed the hope that the year 1939 would surprise us with a new and sensational species of a "Hundred Year Old Queen of Begonias" including all the qualities desired.

Verbena—Blue Sentinel . . . Here is an excellent new ground cover. Plants form mats 10 in. high and 20 in. in diameter. Royal violet-blue, each floret with white center suffused with light blue. Blooms all summer.

Mr. Norvell Gillespie, Garden Editor of SUNSET and Horticultural Councillor for the Golden Gate Exposition has written the feature article this month expressly for CALIFORNIA GARDEN. We are fortunate to have this first hand account, direct from the Exposition grounds, of the building that should prove to be of greatest interest to us gardeners.

Mr. Morley Retires

Employment of John G. Morley as park planning and maintenance consultant on his retirement this month as park director, and appointment of W. Allen Perry as his successor, were recommended recently to Robert W. Flack, city manager, by the park board.

Mr. Morley has completed 27 years of service with the city, and on Jan. 21 becomes 72, mandatory age for retirement. Mr. Perry has been assistant director for several years.

The Antrol Company is advertising in this number their New Snarol. A few of us were recently asked to test it out in advance. It's good!

The New Snarol, besides being an effective poison, seems to have an irresistible lure to the snail and sluggish sense of smell. It should therefore be put in piles of about a tablespoonful size. You put in short after you have watered a bed, since that is when they crawl best. Flower beds against a fence or wall are most often infested, since any accumulated waste at the back gives them shelter. If you pour the right amount of Snarol onto a small shovel, you can reach with it to near the back and deposit it there without stepping on the newly watered bed. Next morning you will be surprised at the number of dead snails and slugs, their most sensitive and vital portions withered, that surround each pile of Snarol.

One night I forgot and left the box out on a brick walk. Next morning there was a snail on the side of the box, doing his best to climb inside!

—F. G. J.

DECEMBER MEETING

Mrs. Mary A. Greer, president, presiding, a "Family Party" with the season's Christmas spirit prevailed at the December meeting of the San Diego Floral Association with an attendance which greatly exceeded the expectancy of those in charge, owing to the showery weather. The room was fittingly decorated; lighted candles in the windows, and there was a Christmas tree.

With Miss Alma Marks, violinist, accompanied by Miss Helen Trevey at the piano, Sen. Wm. Harper led the singing of several familiar Christmas carols.

Mrs. Arthur Shoven, wife of one of the club's directors, demonstrated the making of wreaths, and other Christmas decorations. She said, "In making wreaths, use what you have in your yard for the green." Using a strip of reed, a circular band was formed. That was covered with gum paper; then with sprigs of myrtus communis she bound them to the band, using fine wire from a spool. Color may be added by using berries, flowers, ornaments, etc. The "Dusty Miller" may be effectually used for wreaths of pale green shade.

Mrs. Greer made mention of a "Visitor's Book" at the secretary's desk and requested that all visiting guests from away write their names and addresses therein.

Miss Kate Sessions, Mrs. Bakkers and Mr. C. I. Jerabek gave short informative talks. Mr. and Mrs. Jerabek have raised poinsettias for years, and a recent photograph of their garden was shown the audience. Miss Sessions gave credit to their poinsettia garden as one of the city's best. Mr. Jerabek suggested that acres of poinsettias—the red, pink and white ones—should be planted in Balboa Park. He said, "When planting poinsettias, prepare a hole for the cuttings with some suitable implement, then add a small amount of fertilizer before setting the cutting. Give a copious supply of water, AFTER the leaves are on, during the whole process of growth."

Potted plants were given to number holders, and cakes with wassail, were served

THE TAIL-TALE OF CACTI

I once had a garden of old-fashioned blooms
 Tube roses and violets, sweet alyssums and brooms
 Small plants for borders and tapering tall
 Plants, whose life made a shelter for all.

I moved from the country to a city near by.
 My plants would have care and I knew they'd not die.
 But lonely was I 'til a wistful-eyed fellow
 Came to me as a gift, in his pottery yellow.

I've grown very fond of my botanitailed plant
 Though his prickles are fierce, his sigh is a chant
 And his non-wagging tail paints in the blue sky,
 "I'm your garden, dear lady, 'The Tail-Tale of Cacti'."

Mary Green Payson



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